

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8373

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN CONGRESS - FURTHER WEAKENING OF
VERTICALISTA POSITION

1. SUMMARY: CONGRESSIONAL AND PARTY ACTIVITY DURING AIR FORCE REVOLT CONTINUED AT HIGH LEVEL--IF SOMEWHAT OUTSIDE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT. IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, VERTICALISTAS CONTINUED TO SUFFER FURTHER DECLINE IN THEIR FORTUNES. CORRUPTION ISSUE IS CONTINUING TO GAIN MOMENTUM AND IT NOW APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT VERTICALISTAS ARE IN POSITION TO HEAD OFF USE OF CONGRESS AS SOUNDING BOARD FOR FURTHER FLAYING OF MRS. PERON, OR EVEN TO PREVENT POSSIBLE INITIATION OF IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS. TO AVOID CONGRESSIONAL SHOWDOWN OVER MRS. PERON, SOME OF HER SUPPORTERS ARE FLOATING THE IDEA THAT ADMINISTRATION WITHDRAW PENDING BILLS FROM CONGRESS, THUS AUTOMATICALLY ENDING SPECIAL SESSION. IF THIS WERE DONE, MOVE COULD HAVE BOOMERANG EFFECT. UCR AND "WORKING GROUP" PERONISTS ARE STEPPING UP ATTACKS AGAINST MRS. PERON AND EDGING CLOSER TO OUTRIGHT CALL FOR HER OUSTER. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING AIR FORCE REVOLT, INABILITY OF ORTHODOX PERONISTS IN THE CONGRESS TO CONTROL POLITICAL SITUATION BECAME GLARINGLY OBVIOUS. SOON AFTER REVOLT BEGAN VERTICALISTAS FOUND THAT THEY COULD NOT EVEN CONVOKE A SESSION TO REPUDIATE A POSSIBLE COUP, WHICH ALL PARTIES OPPOSED, WITHOUT OPENING DOOR TO FLOOD OF
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SHARP AND EVER-WIDENING ATTACKS ON THE ADMINISTRATION. AFTER

SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO HOLD SESSION IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES TO OBTAIN STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF MRS. PERON AND CONSTITUTIONALISM, CHAMBER PRESIDENT SANCHEZ TORANZO OPTED TO SUSPEND SESSIONS. AT THAT POINT OPPOSITION WHICH WANTED ITS VIEWS ON RECORD MADE REPEATED DEMANDS ON SANCHEZ TORANZO TO CONVOKE SESSION. MATTER BECAME SO HEATED THAT ONE UCR DEPUTY PUBLICLY CALLED SANCHEZ TORANZO IMMORAL AND UNPRINCIPLED. TAKING UMBRAGE AT REMARK SANCHEZ TORANZO CHALLENGED CONGRESSMAN TO A DUEL. WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ONLY CASUALTY OF REVOLT WAS AVERTED WHEN SECONDS OF THE TWO AGRIEVED PARTIES AGREED THAT NEITHER PARTY'S HONOR DEMANDED SUCH DRASTIC ACTION TO ACHIEVE SATISFACTION. SANCHEZ TORANZO HIMSELF BECAME THE OBJECT OF MORE SERIOUS AND BITTER ATTACKS FROM UCR AND OTHER PARTIES WHO ARE CALLING FOR HIS OUSTER. SUCH IS THE DECLINE IN HIS AND VERTICALISTA BLOC'S POSITION THAT SOME VERTICALISTAS ARE CONSIDERING OFFERING CHAMBER PRESIDENCY TO THE "WORKING GROUP" FACTION IN EXCHANGE FOR GREATER SHOW OF PERONIST PARTY UNITY. MOVE FROM WITHIN TO DUMP SANCHEZ TORANZO BEING LED BY "MODERATE" VERTICALISTAS WHO BELIEVE PRESENT POLICY OF BLIND LOYALTY TO MRS. PERON WILL ISOLATE BLOC.

3. MOVE TO USE CORRUPTION ISSUE AS MEANS OF OUSTING MRS. PERON CONTINUES TO GAIN ADHERENTS IN CONGRESS. SOME CONGRESSMEN HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THEY NOW HAVE NEARLY ENOUGH VOTES TO IMPEACH MRS. PERON. THIS MAY BE SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT OPPONENTS HAVE CLOUT TO BRING TO FLOOR ANY CHARGE AGAINST MRS. PERON THEY WISH TO AIR.

4. AS RESULT OF THESE ADVERSE DEVELOPMENTS, JULIO GONZALEZ, MRS. PERON'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, HAS ATTEMPTED TO SECURE CABINET APPROVAL FOR WITHDRAWAL BY ADMINISTRATION OF ALL BILLS IT HAS SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS. THIS WOULD AUTOMATICALLY END SPECIAL SESSION. GONZALEZ HOPES THIS WILL SHUT OFF OPPONENTS' USE OF CONGRESS AS PUBLIC FORUM FOR FURTHER ATTACKS AGAINST MRS. PERON. ANY EFFORT IN THIS DIRECTION LIKELY TO HAVEK BOOMERANG EFFECT, HOWEVER, AS KEY BUDGET AND OTHER ECONOMIC BILLS, AS WELL AS DEFENSE BILL, WHICH MILITARY CONSIDERS VITAL LEGISLATION, WOULD HAVE TO BE WITHDRAWN. INTERIOR MINISTER ROBLEDO IS OPPOSED TO GONZALEZ PLAN AND AWARE OF LIABILITIES GONZALEZ SCHEME WOULD INCUR. HOWEVER, ROBLEDO IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NO LONGER ON SPEAKING TERMS WITH MRS. PERON AND MUST CONDUCT HIS BUSINESS WITH HER THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES. FURTHER, IF PAST PERFORMANCES AS A GUIDE, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE MRS. PERON WILL FOLLOW NOT ROBLEDO'S ADVICE BUT THAT OF HER POLITICALLY-INEPT INNER CIRCLE.

5. COMMENT: IN WAKE OF AIR FORCE REVOLT POLITICAL PARTIES WHO SEE MRS. PERON'S REMOVAL AS ONLY WAY OF SAVING CONSTITUT-

TIONAL ORDER WILL DOUBTLESS STEP UP EFFORTS TO FORCE HER OUT
OF OFFICE. MAJOR QUESTION IS WHETHER THEIR METHODS, WHICH
WILL REQUIRE TIME TO IMPLEMENT, WILL PRODUCE ANYTHING BEFORE
A NEW AND PERHAPS DECISIVE MILITARY THREAT TO CONSTITUTIONALISM
EMERGES.
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